

DEATH TAX IS UNAMERICAN

(Mr. BARTLETT of Maryland asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. BARTLETT of Maryland. Mr. Speaker, William Shakespeare once wrote, "For in that sleep of death, what dreams may come when we have shuffled off this mortal coil must give us pause."

Hundreds of years before the death tax was even conceived, Shakespeare captured the worries felt by thousands of Americans, hoping to leave their life's work to their loved ones. Sadly, this dying wish often does not come true for those trying to leave a small business or family farm to their relatives. The death tax thwarts them at every turn, costing surviving relatives up to 60 percent of the business or property's worth.

Mr. Speaker, this is blatantly wrong. Fortunately, today the House has an opportunity to right this injustice. Before us today is H.R. 8, the Death Tax Elimination Act. This common sense legislation challenges the IRS's assertion that grief also should be taxed. The death tax is un-American, and it deserves an appropriate burial.

Vote in favor of H.R. 8.

HUMAN INITIATIVE THWARTED BY DEATH TAX

(Mr. GILCHREST asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. GILCHREST. Mr. Speaker, today we are going to vote on a bill that will, in about a decade, eliminate what we have come to know as the death tax or the estate tax.

In this country, we lose about 1 million acres of agricultural land a year, 1 million acres; and it is not slowing down. In my State alone, we lose about 25,000 acres of farmland every single year. There is a lot of reasons for that. One of them is that when a farmer dies, in order to leave that farm or what we may call an estate to his children, they have to pay an enormous tax. To pay that tax, many of these young people, these young farmers that want to stay on the land, must sell a portion, if not all of that land, in order to pay the Federal Government their tax. This is wrong. We need to correct that.

Mr. Speaker, we need to correct the fact that human initiative needs an opportunity to be fulfilled, and that opportunity for farmers is to stay on the land. Today, Mr. Speaker, I would hope that everyone votes for this bill.

POSTAL SERVICE ISSUES
ADOPTION AWARENESS STAMP

(Mr. BARRETT of Nebraska asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. BARRETT of Nebraska. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to remind my colleagues that the U.S. Postal Service has recently issued an adoption awareness stamp.

As a proud grandfather of two adopted children, I am particularly aware of the need to call attention to this subject and to encourage more adoptions. We all know that every child needs support, guidance, and understanding of people who care enough to offer love, a home and a family. Far too many children in the U.S. are waiting to be adopted. Most have special needs, they are older, they often have emotional and physical problems; but they still need a home.

In my State, more than 400 children were placed in adoptive homes last year, but there are still 100 or more Nebraska children waiting for families right now.

Although Congress has passed laws to encourage adoption, we need more adoptive families, and if adopting a child is not an option, there are other ways to help: mentoring, contributing to any of the fine organizations that promote adoption, and certainly buying the special U.S. Postal Service adoption stamps will help call attention to this issue.

I encourage everyone to help find every child a loving family.

SLAVERY STILL EXISTS IN NEW MILLENNIUM

(Mr. PITTS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. PITTS. Mr. Speaker, who would ever have thought that we would be talking about the horror of modern-day slavery in this new millennium?

Francis Bok is a 21-year-old native of southern Sudan. At age 7 he was captured and enslaved during an Arab militia raid on his village. Francis saw children and adults brutalized and killed all around him. He was strapped to a donkey and taken north, and for 10 years he lived as a family slave. He was forced to sleep with cattle and endure daily beatings and eat terrible food.

In December of 1996, Francis escaped to a nearby town where local policemen enslaved him again. Again he escaped. Eventually he reached Khartoum, the capital, where he was arrested by security forces and jailed for 7 months. After being released, Mr. Bok was able to make his way to Cairo, Egypt, and finally, in 1999, the U.N. resettled him in the United States of America.

Mr. Speaker, I met Francis yesterday. It is an incredible story. It is incomprehensible that slavery still persists in the world today. It is harder to understand why the Clinton administration has not made stopping slavery and genocide in Sudan a priority.

ALL CHILDREN HAVE STRONG POTENTIAL TO ACHIEVE

(Mr. HINOJOSA asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. HINOJOSA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of this amendment on the 21st Century Community Learning Centers. I have been involved with education issues for almost 30 years. This experience has strongly reinforced for me that all children, regardless of income level or race, have the same potential for high achievement and healthy development when provided appropriate opportunities.

Thus our goal must be to support the development of quality after-school programs for all children, but especially those in low-income communities. Our goal should also be to see the expanded day programs linked to the core school day.

ISRAEL GRANTED MEMBERSHIP IN WEOG

(Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, as a cosponsor of H.R. 3405, the Equality for Israel at the United Nations Act that pushed for equality at the U.N. for our closest ally, I am pleased that because of U.S. pressure, Israel has finally achieved a long-deserved, although partial, victory.

Israel for years has been refused entry into one of the 5 regional groupings and thus has been denied full membership at the U.N., although it has been a member since 1949. This has undermined and weakened Israel's ability to function effectively within the international community.

Israel has now finally been granted membership in the Western European and Other Group, WEOG; however, with conditions.

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Many of us will continue to push for Israel's full membership in the WEOG, as well as its membership in its rightful regional grouping, which is the Asian group. Israel has earned it. Few other countries have been tested in this manner and have given so much to protect the very principles upon which the United Nations was founded.

INTERNATIONAL ABDUCTION

(Mr. LAMPSON asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. LAMPSON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to tell the story of the abduction of Nocona Lynn Smith when she was 3 years old. Nocona was abducted by her